

March 7th, 2012

Delivered on Behalf of Subcommittee Ranking Member Rep. Peter Visclosky

"Assistant Secretary Darcy and General Temple, we appreciate you appearing before the Subcommittee this afternoon.

"I am sure everyone in the room is aware that the last twelve months have been very busy for the Corps. In addition to its planned and budgeted projects, much of the cleanup and reconstruction responsibilities stemming from the significant flooding events in the Mississippi and Missouri River Basins fell upon the Corps. There was also the response to the widespread flooding in the Northeast from Hurricane Irene. And, I would be remiss if I did not highlight that the Corps played a major role in the disaster recovery efforts from the devastating tornados that struck Missouri and Alabama. I mention these events to point out the important and vital function that the Corps plays in our nation's ability to prevent and respond to natural disasters. And I know that many people on this dais and throughout the country are very thankful for the Corps efforts in this regard.

"However, I also bring up these events to draw attention to the significant financial cost borne by the Corps, and ultimately the taxpayer, both in the initial response and in the long-term reconstruction efforts. While it is impossible to entirely prevent some natural disasters, I believe that many are exacerbated by the dramatic underinvestment in our nation's infrastructure. We need to make preventative and proactive investments because in almost every circumstance, it makes more fiscal sense to prevent a disaster than to respond. Hurricane Katrina is a prime example of this adage. Additionally, businesses and individuals are much more likely to invest in a community if there is confidence in its infrastructure. By now, everyone has probably heard me cite the American Society of Civil Engineers 2009 Report Card that gave the U.S. a D or D-grade in every water related category. This grade must improve if we want our economy to rebound.

"So, needless to say, I am frustrated that the Corps FY 2013 budget requests \$271 million or 5.4 percent less than the FY 2012 enacted level. I had hoped that this budget would reflect the lessons learned from the prior year and begin to make sound infrastructure investments, lessening the humanitarian and fiscal repercussions of natural disasters. Instead it will be up to

Congress to again augment the Corps inadequate request, but even then, this subcommittee's allocation will probably not allow it to make a significant dent, if any, in this shortsighted budget.

"Further, in a constrained budget environment, the Corps must carefully examine the policies and processes that govern how it does business, from cost estimating, highlighted by the recent upward revisions to the total project cost of Olmstead Lock and Dam, to Division and Headquarters oversight. I am confident that more attention in these areas would be beneficial to the business processes and your credibility as an agency.

"Finally, as a Great Lakes legislator, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Corps on its robust request to support initiatives to prevent the spread of Asian carp. There is no question that we must continue to be proactive in finding a long-term and sustainable solution to the threat posed by invasive species and this budget request reflects that. I hope your testimony will touch upon the Corps efforts on this front and the progress being made on the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study.

"I look forward to your testimony and thank the Chairman for the time."

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